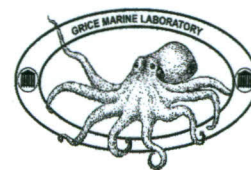


The Graduate School – College of Charleston
Grice Marine Laboratory
205 Fort Johnson
Charleston, South Carolina 29412



Telephone: (843) 953-9200
Facsimile: (843) 953-9199
e-mail: marine@cofc.edu

April 7, 2009

Congressman Henry Brown, Jr. (SC-1)
103 Cannon House Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Brown,

As a marine biologist who has worked on sea turtle biology and conservation for most of my 35 year career I can not thank you enough for your strong support for our "South Carolina Aquarium Sea Turtle Rescue Program" also known as the "Turtle Hospital".

There are three distinct but equally important reasons why the Turtle Hospital has become such a valuable asset for the South Carolina Lowcountry and why the South Carolina Aquarium has done such a fantastic job.

1. The facility is an **unparalleled educational opportunity for citizens** to understand how much we care about our marine environment and how much progress we have made in sea turtle conservation in the past several years.
2. The staff and volunteers have **saved and rehabilitated dozens of sea turtles**, including both endangered and threatened species. In most cases these animals would have been lost to the already depleted gene pool.
3. The program has provided an **intensive educational and research opportunity for aspiring scientists** as well as senior scientists to make a significant contribution to our understanding of sea turtles. Part of the issue is our lack of understanding of their physiology and ecology. Students at all levels have been able to study with the Aquarium staff and learn about their animals as they are being rescued.

As a University professor who is struggling to train scientists for careers that will keep them here in South Carolina it is very important that I let you know just how valuable this facility and their Sea Turtle work has become to our teaching programs. We have now had four Master's degree students do much of their thesis work in collaboration

with the Turtle Hospital. Many additional interns and volunteers work there on a daily basis and each has had a valuable and formative experience which can only do our state and our country good down the road as we continue to address our coastal resource concerns. We strongly urge you to continue your support for this modest but critical project and we especially thank you for taking the initiative to help us all make a difference in our environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Wm. Owens". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "D" and "W".

David Wm. Owens

Professor of Biology

Associate Dean of the Graduate School